

## KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER

**HON. RON PACKARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 24, 1999*

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to applaud the efforts of citizens in my district and across the country. Thanks to their unending efforts, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) recently retracted their proposed "Know Your Customer" rule. This proposal would have required banks to monitor their customers and snoop out information for federal government files.

According to the FDIC, the intent of the "Know Your Customer" rule was to ensure that banks and savings institutions have policies and procedures for screening transactions tied to criminal activities, such as money laundering or drug trafficking. In reality, this legislation would have created an Orwellian system of government. Our constituents recognized this and voiced their strong opposition to it.

We should not forget that Americans have the right to expect privacy protections. The fact is, under the "Know Your Customer" rule, banks would have been required to track money sources and report all "out-of-the-ordinary" transactions to the federal government. In other words, this would have allowed the banks and our government the right to snoop in our personal information. That is wrong! Good business practices should already allow banks to know their customers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank American citizens for strengthening our democratic system of government by loudly voicing their opposition to this rule. "Know Your Customer" would have been a clear invasion of privacy of all citizens and I am pleased it has been retracted.

JOHN LEE SULLIVAN MAKES HIS  
MARK ON THE WORLD**HON. BOB ETHERIDGE**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 24, 1999*

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Caroline and Richard Sullivan of Charlotte, North Carolina. On March 7, 1999 at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, they welcomed into the world their first child, John Lee Sullivan. There is nothing more wonderful and joyous than watching a child grow and I know that they will treasure every new day with their son. Faye joins me in wishing the Sullivans great happiness during this very special time of their lives.

CONSUMER CREDIT REPORT ACCU-  
RACY AND PRIVACY ACT OF 1999**HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 24, 1999*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join eleven of my colleagues in introducing the Consumer Credit Report Accuracy and Privacy Act of 1999. My bill gives

every American the right to examine and correct their credit reports free of charge.

The credit reporting industry affects the lives of virtually every working American. Information used in a credit report can affect the ability to obtain a job, credit card, insurance policy, or even a place to live. For this reason, it is imperative that the credit industry maintain accurate records on American consumers.

In spite of the fact that the reporting of false delinquencies, errors in personal demographic information, and missing credit accounts all have the potential to result in the denial of credit, only six states (Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey and Vermont) offer consumers free credit reports on request. For the rest of the nation, most consumers cannot obtain a free credit report until after they have already been denied credit or suspect they are a victim of fraud.

The fact that the three largest credit bureaus have 450 million files on individual consumers and process over 2 billion pieces of data every month presents a daunting challenge to maintain the most accurate records possible. Given these figures, the chance of acquiring inaccurate information is highly likely. In fact, some studies have shown that up to one third of credit reports could contain serious mistakes.

It is important to note that the credit reporting industry gathers its information without the direct consent of American consumers, and in turn, uses this information for its own profit through the sales of reports to credit grantors, employers, insurance companies, and landlords. Consumers should have the right to know what is being said about them, especially if the information will affect their overall credit standing.

My bill will also help to address the growing problem of identity theft. Increasingly, criminals are able to obtain personal credit reports and assume a consumer's credit identity. In the process, they are able to run up huge debts while ruining the unsuspecting victim's credit records. We could minimize this problem if consumers more regularly audited their own credit reports to find out who else has been looking at them.

This bill has the endorsement of the nation's key consumer advocacy organizations, including U.S. Public Interest Research Group, Consumer Action, Community Reinvestment Committee, Consumer Federation of America, Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

In closing, the Consumer Credit Report Accuracy and Privacy Act encourages consumers to be pro-active in reviewing and protecting their personal credit history from possible mistakes and fraud. My bill simply gives consumers the right to know what credit bureaus are saying about them without having to pay a fee for the privilege.

SIKHS WILL CELEBRATE 300TH AN-  
NIVERSARY—AMERICA SHOULD  
SUPPORT SIKH FREEDOM**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 24, 1999*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, this April marks a very significant occasion, the 300th anniver-

sary of the Sikh Nation. The occasion will be celebrated with a big march in Washington, with prayers, and in many other ways. Let us join with the Sikhs on this auspicious occasion and pray that they will soon enjoy the same freedom in their homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, that we enjoy here in America.

I would like to congratulate the Sikh Nation on this major milestone, which was brought to my attention by Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. Many of us have been made aware of the brutal oppression of the Sikhs by the Indian government due to Dr. Aulakh's tireless efforts. I am pleased to note that Dr. Aulakh's office is organizing the march.

There are half of a million Sikhs in the United States. They have added to the richness of American life in many aspects of life and work. They have been productive, proud, law-abiding Americans. The Sikhs came to this country to enjoy the freedom that has made America the great country that it is. On this very special occasion for the Sikh Nation, let us honor those fine Americans by taking steps to help their Sikh brothers and sisters in Punjab, Khalistan enjoy the same freedom. That is the best way to prevent another Bosnia or Kosovo in South Asia.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, there is no freedom for Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, Dalits, or other minorities in India today. The Indian government continues to practice a brutal oppression that has taken tens of thousands of Sikh, Christian, Muslim, and other human lives. Yet this brutal country continues to be among the top five recipients of U.S. aid.

Why are we using tax dollars to support this repressive government? Even with our budget surplus, this is a bad use of taxpayers' money. We should cut off this aid and declare our support for self-determination in the Indian subcontinent. The Sikhs of Khalistan, the Muslims of Kashmir, the Christians of Nagaland, and others seek only to decide their futures in the democratic way, by voting. As the beacon of freedom in the world, it is our moral duty to support this struggle for freedom. Let us take the occasion of the Sikh Nation's 300th anniversary to commit ourselves to full support for freedom for all people, starting with these few simple measures.

## TRIBUTE TO BESSIE BAUGHN

**HON. ANNA G. ESHOO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 24, 1999*

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bessie Baughn, an exceptional citizen of San Mateo County, California, who will be inducted into the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame on Friday, March 26, 1999.

Bessie Baughn's motto is: "If there's a need, I fill it." This explains the amazing list of boards and organizations which Bessie currently is an integral part of. She has been named the Volunteer of the Year twice, the Woman of Distinction, and the Woman of the Year.

Several of Bessie Baughn's achievements include founding the San Bruno Volunteer Services and Operation Video which provides videos to the residents of nursing homes. Bessie not only puts in time and energy, but also